

Dengue is a Global Issue

Some diseases in the United States, as in other countries, must be reported by physicians and hospitals to public health authorities as a means of establishing the baseline occurrence of the disease or condition. In this way any increase above baseline will promptly trigger a public health response. This is important with infectious diseases because it allows authorities to alert the community of an increased health risk and to take action to protect the public. In the US, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responsible for collecting and analyzing these data. The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), representing each state and territorial jurisdiction in the country, determines the list of reportable diseases. CSTE balances the resources demanded by reporting diseases against the potential public health benefit, and revises the list of reportable diseases periodically. On the recommendation of the CSTE, dengue became reportable in January 2010. In 2014, the CSTE dengue case definitions and reporting statement were revised to account for current approaches in dengue diagnostic testing.

In the United States, dengue is endemic in Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. In addition, US travelers are at risk as dengue is the leading cause of acute febrile illness among travelers returning from the Caribbean, Latin America, and South Central/Southeast Asia. Dengue was once common in the southern and eastern US, but few cases had occurred in the continental US for over 50 years until recently. In the last decade, there have been dengue outbreaks with local dengue virus transmission in Texas, Hawaii, and Florida. Returning DENV-infected travelers, can introduce local DENV transmission to areas of the US where one of the mosquito vectors for dengue (*Aedes aegypti* or *Aedes albopictus*) are present. With dengue as a reportable disease, there are now increased opportunities to investigate cases, to detect outbreaks earlier, and to have statistics that more accurately reflect reality.

CDC encourages providers to report all confirmed and presumptive cases of dengue to their local or State Health Department who will report them to ArboNET, a national electronic passive surveillance system for arboviral diseases. Dengue cases are now reported on a weekly basis to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) via the ArboNET surveillance system. Ultimately, adding dengue to the nationally reportable disease list allows state and CDC authorities to systematically review collected data to identify trends. As a result, local communities can focus their attention on prevention, while local health care providers can be more vigilant in looking for the potential of dengue in their patients.

Resources

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CDC. Summary of Notifiable Infectious Diseases and Conditions– United States, 2013. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2015; 62(53); 1-119. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6253a1.htm>.

